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...It was four o'clock Saturday morning and Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury couldn't sleep.

It wasn't the patter of the incessant rain hitting the window panes of his hotel room in Washington, D.C., it was more his wanting the new day to start sooner.

Waiting until 6:30 a.m., he called Canada Free Press (CFP) from his ever present cellular.

"Forgive me if I woke anybody," he said.

This is his second trip to the U.S., as arranged by the people who saved his life, Dr. Richard L. Benkin and Rep. Mark Kirk. Choudhury was arrested and tortured for exposing the rise of Islamists in Bangladesh, spending 17 long months in prison before being set free to an uncertain future in April of 2005.

On his current American tour, the editor of The Weekly Blitz has been meeting with lawmakers, advocacy and rights groups and students in Chicago, Washington and Philadelphia.

On October 30, at noon, Choudhury will once again address the prestigious Hudson Institute in New York about what we can do to combat Islamist extremism and to support anti-Islamist Muslims.

While in Chicago, the award-winning journalist visited the Illinois Holocaust Museum and met Holocaust survivor and celebrated author Sam Harris.

I spoke at length to Benkin on the telephone two nights ago, telling him how impressed I am with Choudhury's infectious enthusiasm. "His charm is captivating and you would love him," Benkin said.

Reaching out from the darkness of Dhaka, Choudhury first contacted Benkin via the world wide net. Benkin not only immediately responded by email, but also subsequently wrote an article called Hello Bangladesh for The Weekly Blitz.

Endearingly Choudhury now describes their friendship, "Two men, one Muslim one Jewish, once strangers, now brothers!"

Courageous and charming, Choudhury is well received wherever he goes. Unassuming and self-deprecating, "I'm not an important person in this fight, but only a small cog in the wheel," he told CFP.

But Shoaib Choudhury is in reality a Muslim hero, at a time when a terrorism wary world most needs one.

A little guy with spunk, Choudhury had tucked the latest copies of The Weekly Blitz into his suitcase on the way to a 2003 conference in Tel Aviv.

Instead government agents arrested him, as he was about to board his plane. The arrest was carried out with Islamist forces because of his open advocacy of relations with Israel and interfaith dialogue based on his religions equality, and his many articles exposing the rise of radical Islam in Bangladesh through some 64.000-and growing Bangladeshi madrasses.

Bangladesh does not recognize Israel and refuses him the same option.

Tortured and refused medication for the glaucoma from which he suffers; forbidden to attend his own mother's funeral, Choudhury was held in prison for 17 months. Indeed, he was only

released after unrelenting pressure by Benkin and Kirk. Bangladeshi officials, who admit they are maintained only to appease Islamists, have never dropped the trumped up charges against him.

The free world knows all about Choudhury as the fearless editor of The Weekly Blitz. Few know that he was once (1993-1995) Chief Correspondent, for the Itar-Tass News Agency (Russia), or that he was founder and Managing Director (1995-1999) of A-21 TV, Bangladesh's first private television channel.

Choudhury has made it a life mission to pursue the truth in the most dangerous of places. Praise from around the world met the publication of his new book Injustice & Jihad. "Mr. Choudhury is a man in the mold of such heroes of freedom as Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa," said the New York Sun.

In its editorial the Washington Times said, "The United States must encourage people like Mr. Choudhury to speak out. But when they do, it must also do all it can to protect them. Freeing Mr. Choudhury will tell others like him that when you stand against Islamists, the United States will stand with you."

The Jerusalem Post said, "Despite the dire circumstances in which he finds himself, Choudhury remains strong, upbeat and determined."

The Jewish Week said, "In a world where radical Islam is on the march, threatening moderate Muslims and non-Muslims alike, outspoken and fearless individuals like Mr. Choudhury deserve our full support. It is they, after all, who are on the front lines."

These are all accolades that Choudhury takes in stride.

The Bangladeshi journalist, who can now add the Monaco 2007 Award for Courage in Journalism to his roster, remains solidly on message.

“The Weekly Blitz is saying we have to say no to jihad, not to Holocaust denial, and we openly advocate relations between Dhaka and Jerusalem,” he tells American policy makers.

When he started out just a few years ago, the words ‘Israel’ and ‘Jew’ were taboo. In Muslim dominated Bangladesh. Thanks to the unflagging courage of an editor whose office was bombed twice, now they are not.

The words, “If there will be no more voices against jihad, in tomorrow’s world there will be thousands of Osama bin Ladens” will resonate long after he returns home.

“They are active; we are silent. Our silence is giving them strength.”

“How can you save my life?” asks this Muslim hero with a pen. “Let Bangladesh recognize Israel.”